

## CHALLENGE: RECREATION

*“Balance the needs of various recreation types and find suitable multiple-use management solutions”* *Washington, DC Session\**



*This reservoir provides a recreational beach for residents of Coralville, Iowa.*

### High Use

- Fifty million people fish in the U.S. each year.
- Most of our Nation’s outdoor recreation — 75% -- is within a mile of streams or another body of water.
- The Nation’s nearly 1,800 Federal lakes host 900 million visits a year.
- Over 3 million visitors attend educational programs each year.
- Americans spend \$15 billion visiting Federal parks and recreation areas each year, resulting in 500,000 jobs.

### Disrepair

- One-fourth of the Nation’s recreation sites at water resources projects are in need of significant modernization; many sites have health and safety concerns.
- The current backlog of deferred maintenance at Federal lakes now exceeds \$800 million.
- Though many regions rely on tourism and outdoor recreation for economic stimulus and employment, numerous recreation areas are degraded and overcrowded.
- Most recreational facilities were built in the 1960s and do not meet the needs of people today.

### Conflicting Priorities

There are growing conflicts between recreational uses of waterways and the marine transportation system. Both recreation and commerce have increased on waterways, causing congestion and potential safety issues.

### Comments from the Listening Sessions

- “Recognizing that recreation involves all walks of life. Recreation needs to be part of every aspect of government.” *Manufacturer, Washington, D.C. Session*
- “Need ways to deal with increased recreation demands (opportunities) and the resulting environment impacts.” *Omaha Session*
- “Need to respond to changing water recreation activities and resolve conflicts.” *Vancouver Session*
- “Benefits of recreation need to be considered in B/C analysis and a part of project development for all federal projects.” *St. Louis Session*
- “Enforcement responsibilities for 404 permits. If Corps does not have money for enforcement, quite issuing permits.” *Chicago Session*
- “Need for enforcement resources to support program.” *Louisville Session*
- “Enhance water based recreational opportunities.” *Louisville Session*
- “Increase ability to provide for quality recreation, visitor satisfaction, and adequate facilities.” *Washington D.C. Session*
- “Give recreation appropriate consideration and a higher priority regarding the management of national recreation lakes.” *Washington D.C. Session*
- “Address the overabundance of debris in the waterways.” *Washington D.C. Session*

### Recreation and tourism compete with marine transportation and environmental impact

A large portion of the Nation’s water resources is used primarily (or secondarily) for recreation. Many water resources projects incorporate recreation use into project plan-

*\*Topics in this paper were identified at 16 Listening Sessions between June and November 2000. The purposes of the Listening Sessions were to start a dialogue and to provide citizens an opportunity to tell us what they believed the Federal role should be in addressing water resources.*

ning. One common example is the use of reservoirs for water recreation. This multi-purpose approach to projects has allowed for a large increase in recreational opportunities. Nevertheless, participants did not feel the proper level of priority has been given for recreation. Some felt recreation should be addressed more in the water resources planning and management process.

Participants acknowledged growing conflicts between recreational users of waterways and the marine transportation system. Both recreational use and waterborne commerce on waterways have increased over time, causing congestion and potential safety issues. Participants voiced a need for better waterway management to allow for efficient commerce and safe recreational use.

Some participants stressed the need for additional funding for adequate operation and maintenance of recreation facilities. Numerous recreational areas are degraded and overcrowded, with little being done to resolve the issue. Many regions rely on tourism and outdoor recreation to provide revenue. With this in mind, proper funding and management of recreation areas is crucial to the success of these activities.

### Regional Concerns

Areas where recreation received the most attention included Washington, D.C.; Louisville, KY; Vancouver, WA; and St. Louis, MO.

Major emphasis was given to the recreation theme at the national session in Washington, D.C. Participants expressed a need for increased consideration for recreational use. This would require additional communication and coordination between recreational users and various agencies to better accommodate the demand for recreational use of waterways. Particular comments were made regarding dams and their importance to recreation activities, such as rafting and boating.

Participants in Louisville, KY commented on the waterway conflicts between recreational users and those using waterways for commerce. Recommendations were made to develop a licensing program for recreational users to increase safety.

Participants in Vancouver, WA discussed the management of dams and the effects it has on recreation in the area. Many businesses rely on the waterways for boat tours and personal use. Participants expressed a need for better waterway management, where recre-

ation would have a greater consideration within the planning of waterway use.

Participants in St. Louis, MO felt the addition of wetlands along waterways would not only minimize flooding, but also serve as areas for bird watchers to visit. Furthermore, parks could be built (rather than homes or businesses) in areas where flooding is frequent. These parks would serve as useful recreational areas and act as non-structural flood control areas, therefore reducing flood damage to nearby homes and businesses.



*Participants voiced a need for better waterway management to allow for efficient commerce and safe recreational use.*

### ***Americans say the Federal government should:***

- Make recreation a Federal priority.
- Build and improve facilities.
- Maintain recreation facilities currently in use.